



Memorandum of Understanding between the Research Data Alliance and the International Council for Science – World Data System

The ICSU World Data System (hereinafter ICSU-WDS) and the Research Data Alliance (hereinafter RDA) are organizations with related missions and are natural partners in the pursuit of various objectives with regard to the availability, interoperability, and reuse of research data. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to state clearly the intention of ICSU-WDS and RDA to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in areas of mutual interest. Moreover, the MoU defines the conditions under which RDA and ICSU-WDS will cooperate and coordinate their efforts in these areas in order to promote a successful working partnership and to avoid duplication and conflict. This document is not legally binding.

1. The goal of RDA is to accelerate international data-driven innovation and discovery by facilitating research data sharing and exchange. This is achieved through the development, adoption, and deployment of infrastructure, policy, practice, standards, and other deliverables. The emphasis of RDA is the adoption and deployment, rather than development of new infrastructure that may be beyond the normal timeframe of RDA activity.

To facilitate the achievement of this goal, members of RDA adopt the following Guiding Principles that underlie the conduct and evolution of the organization.

Guiding Principles of RDA

- Openness—Membership is open to all interested individuals who subscribe to the RDA's Guiding Principles. RDA community meetings and processes are open, and the deliverables of RDA Working Groups will be publicly disseminated;
- Consensus—RDA moves forward by achieving consensus among its membership. RDA processes and procedures include appropriate mechanisms to resolve conflicts;
- Balance—RDA seeks to promote balanced representation of its membership and stakeholder communities;
- Harmonization—RDA works to achieve harmonization across data standards, policies, technologies, infrastructure, and communities;
- Community-driven—RDA is a public, community-driven body, constituted of volunteer members and organizations, and supported by the RDA Secretariat.



- Non-profit—RDA does not promote, endorse, or sell commercial products, technologies, or services.
2. The work of RDA is primarily undertaken through its working groups. All individuals who subscribe to the RDA Guiding Principles may participate in working groups and interest groups, start new working groups, and attend the twice-yearly Plenary meetings.
 3. ICSU's long-term vision is *of a world where excellence in science is effectively translated into policy making and socio-economic development. In such a world, universal and equitable access to scientific data and information is a reality and all countries have the scientific capacity to use these and to contribute to generating the new knowledge that is necessary to establish their own development pathways in a sustainable manner.* As an ICSU Interdisciplinary body, WDS supports this vision by promoting universal and equitable access to, and long-term stewardship of, quality-assured scientific data and data services, products, and information covering a broad range of disciplines from the natural and social sciences, and humanities. ICSU-WDS aims at facilitating scientific research endeavours under the ICSU umbrella by coordinating trusted scientific data services for the provision, use, and preservation of relevant datasets.

To fulfil its remit, ICSU-WDS strives to build a worldwide 'community of excellence' for Trusted Scientific Data Services by certifying member organizations—holders and providers of data or data products—from wide-ranging fields using internationally recognized standards. These WDS Members are then the building blocks of a searchable common infrastructure with which to create a distributed system of interoperable data systems.

WDS Objectives

- Enable universal and equitable access to quality-assured scientific data, data services, products, and information
 - Ensure long-term data stewardship
 - Foster compliance with agreed-upon data standards and conventions
 - Provide mechanisms to facilitate and improve access to data and data products
4. ICSU-WDS achieves its objectives by bringing together Member Organizations to coordinate their activities and form communities of excellence, and in the process, to achieve overall capabilities that transcend individual ones. Its Scientific Committee (the WDS-SC) may establish committees, working groups, or task groups—as needed—to define, coordinate, and facilitate the implementation of projects or



activities addressing the goals and objectives of ICSU-WDS. Chairs and members of these groups are decided by the WDS-SC, which is also responsible for their review and termination.

5. RDA will become an **Associate Member of ICSU-WDS**. As defined by the WDS-SC, an Associate Member of ICSU-WDS is an 'organization interested in the WDS endeavour, but that does not deal directly with data or data services, nor contribute direct funding or other material support to WDS Regular Member nodes'. Associate Members are co-opted by the WDS-SC and are not subject to the WDS certification procedure.
6. ICSU-WDS will become an **Organizational Affiliate of RDA**. As defined by the RDA Organizational Member Process Document, RDA Affiliates are likeminded organizations that seek to coordinate efforts in mutual areas of interest and to avoid unnecessary duplication or conflict.
7. It is the intention of RDA to contribute to ICSU-WDS and to collaborate with its governing body, the WDS-SC. In particular, as an Associate Member, RDA will be invited to participate in ICSU-WDS discussions and to comment on, and contribute to, ICSU-WDS activities. RDA shall participate in the WDS Conference and shall send a representative to the biennial WDS Members Forum, where WDS Members are formally consulted and are expected to present a summary of recent and relevant organizational activities.
8. It is the intention of ICSU-WDS to contribute to RDA, and to collaborate with its Council and Technical Advisory Board. In particular, ICSU-WDS shall send a representative to at least one of the two RDA Plenary meetings each year and shall present a summary of recent and relevant organizational activities. A WDS representative will be invited to attend the Organizational Members session(s), to vote in Organizational Advisory Board elections, and to run for, and be elected to, the Organizational Advisory Board.
9. ICSU-WDS and RDA may establish and support joint Interest Groups and Working Groups on topics of mutual interest, from which the deliverables are expected to benefit the two organizations and the larger research community. In the spirit of good partnership, both organizations will make their best efforts to coordinate these joint activities and to communicate on issues pertaining to them. Such joint activities will also be promoted and publicized as being collaborative in official RDA and WDS documents and communication media.



10. There will be no financial considerations on either side, and both organizations will refrain from using each other's logos and trademarks to make direct financial profit without explicit authorization from the respective governing body.
11. This MoU will enter into force upon signature by both parties and will continue until either organization records its express wish to terminate it.
12. This MoU is to be signed between RDA and ICSU-WDS by the respective heads of organizations or their authorized delegates.

SIGNED
On behalf of ICSU-WDS

Date: *22 September 2014*

Name: Mustapha Mokrane

Position: Executive Director

SIGNED
On behalf of RDA

Date: *22 Sep 14*

Name: Mark A. Parsons

Position: Secretary General